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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Black Market Operations and Cost of Living

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SOURCE

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1. There was a black market in operation in the Orsk area 25X1X
 25X1X but before 1947, it was almost impossible to buy food in the black market because of the cost. In 1946, one loaf of black bread cost 300 rubles and one pound of butter cost 200 rubles.
2. In 1947, there was a devaluation of money all over the USSR and the people who had done some black marketing did not dare to take the money to the bank because the bank always asked where they got it. Consequently, all the money made on the black market was lost although the people with money in the bank did not lose it.
3. In 1949, prices were stabilized and it became possible to buy two pounds of butter for three rubles and finally for 70 kopek. This was the end of the black market in foods. There was a large marketplace in Orsk where peasants could go and buy what they wanted including beef and milk.
- 25X1X 4. the price of milk in 1946 was quite cheap. Most of the peasants had cows and sold their milk. One glass cost 20 kopek and one glass of cream cost 30 kopek. There was no black market in milk after 1946.
5. As for tobacco, there was an increased planting of tobacco by the government in 1946 on the big farms. It cost 50 kopek for 50 grams. However, cigarette paper was very scarce and almost impossible to buy even in a black market. Consequently, all of the POWs and many of the peasants in the Orsk area used newspaper. It was necessary to buy a newspaper at the same time the tobacco was bought to make cigarettes.

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25X1A6. [redacted] eggs were very expensive, costing about 12 kopek for one egg in summer and about twice as much in winter. The only vegetable available in the Orsk area were green cucumbers that were eaten instead of apples. They were expensive and in 1946 cost about one ruble apiece.

Payment of POWs

7. In 1946, the Soviet Government started to pay POWs and after 1946, all of the POWs obtained more food [redacted]

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[redacted]
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8.

25X1X

9. Payment by the Soviets was in accordance with a system which depended upon the amount of work done. There were regulations which called for 100 per cent work each day; and if that specified amount of work was not certified by a supervisor as having been performed, the POW was deducted payment accordingly. There was widespread cheating of the prisoners by the camp officials.

10.

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[redacted]
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[redacted] In many cases, prisoners had to work overtime in order to get any money because the normal work day often did not pay enough to meet the camp charges. If a prisoner did not earn enough money to pay the 432 rubles a month, he was punished and put in a punishment brigade. Actually, the Soviets never paid the full amount that a prisoner earned directly to him but first subtracted the 432 rubles and gave him anything that was left over. If the prisoner did not earn enough to subtract the 432 rubles, he got nothing and further, in addition to his punishment or assignment to the punishment brigade, he had his next month's salary attached. These same rules on payment of POWs continued to exist in 1947, 1948 and 1949 and the 432 rubles per month was the standard price right up to the closing of the POW camp.

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